

# Tallahatchie

## *National Wildlife Refuge*



photo: USFWS



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### Refuge Facts

- Established: 1990.
- Acres: Bear Lake Unit—4,083 acres in Grenada and Tallahatchie counties and the Black Bayou Unit—2,069 acres in Quitman and Tallahatchie counties, MS.
- Refuge is unstaffed and managed by the Mississippi Wetland Management District in Grenada, MS.
- Location: the Bear Lake Unit is located on Highway 8, nine miles west of Holcomb. The Black Bayou Unit is located 4.5 miles south of Crowder. There is no permanent access to the Black Bayou Unit; backwater flooding from the Tallahatchie River floods the Unit for several months each year.

### Natural History

- About 75 percent of the Bear Lake Unit and all of the Black Bayou unit were agricultural lands upon acquisition.
- Large concentrations of migratory waterfowl regularly occur each fall/winter. Very impressive numbers of migrating shorebirds occur in the fall and spring. Bald/golden eagles are present in the winter. Wading birds regularly feed and roost in the summer and fall.

### Financial Impact of Refuge

- Currently unstaffed; development conducted by the Management District.
- 2,500 visitors annually. Visitors began increasing dramatically with the opening of Bear Lake Unit to hunting in 1997. Black Bayou Unit remains closed to public access due to its small size, lack of access, and intensity of management efforts.

- Current budget (FY 98) included in the Management District budget.

### Refuge Objectives

- Provide habitat for migratory waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds.
- Reforestation of nonirrigable agricultural lands to bottomland hardwood forested wetlands.
- Provide recreational use and environmental education for the public.

### Management Tools

- Water management for waterfowl, shorebirds and wading birds.
- Cooperative farming.
- Bottomland hardwood wetland forest management and reforestation.
- Deer management with public hunting.
- Law enforcement.
- Partnerships.

### Public Use Opportunities

- Fishing.
- Hunting, including youth hunts.
- Wildlife observation.
- Photography.

### Calendar of Events

**May:** Migratory Bird Day.

**October:** National Wildlife Refuge Week.

**October-November:** archery deer hunting—Bear Lake Unit.

**October-February:** rabbit hunting—Bear Lake Unit.

**November-March:** waterfowl hunting including youth hunt.

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### Questions and Answers

*Is the Black Bayou Unit open to public use including waterfowl hunting?*

No. The Black Bayou Unit is too small, has no access roads, and is intensively managed for shorebirds and migratory waterfowl that are subject to decline if frequently disturbed.

*Is the Bear Lake Unit open to public hunting including waterfowl hunting?*

Yes. With a \$12.50 refuge hunting permit issued in unlimited numbers, the Bear Lake Unit south of Highway 8 is open to waterfowl hunting, archery deer hunting and rabbit hunting.

*Is the refuge open to fishing?*

Yes. With a \$12.50 refuge fishing permit issued in unlimited numbers, Tippo Bayou on the Bear Lake Unit and the bar pits adjacent to the Corps of Engineers levee at the Black Bayou Unit are open to fishing. A boat ramp was constructed in 1997 for access into Tippo Bayou.

*Will the Service continue reforestation activities on the refuge?*

Yes. The long range goals call for reforestation to native water tolerant bottomland hardwood wetland tree species of all agricultural fields that are not irrigable.

*Will the Service condemn land to expand the size of the refuge?*

No. While the Service has an ongoing acquisition program, all lands acquired have been and will continue to be on a willing seller basis.